

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appl. No. 09/684,634

REMARKS

The Examiner has not indicated whether the drawings filed on October 10, 2000 have been accepted. Applicants respectfully requested the Examiner make such an acknowledgement.

A Notice of References Cited, Form PTO-892 and a signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 that was filed with Applicant's Information Disclosure Statement of October 10, 2000 have been attached to the Office Action. However, they were not indicated in the Office Action Summary sheet. Applicants respectfully requested the Examiner make such an acknowledgement.

Applicants herein affirm the election of Group II, claims 2-8, 10 and 11.

In this Amendment, claim 2 has been amended to replace "formed to be narrow" with --narrowed by putting a lid having an opening at least at a central portion, on said intake for introducing said clean air--. Support for this amendment is found, for example, in original claim 3.

Claims 1, 3 and 9 have been cancelled.

Claims 4-8 have been amended to be dependent from claim 2. Support for this amendment is found, for example, in original claims 2 to 8.

No new matter has been added and entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 2, 4-8, 10 and 11 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 2-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

Particularly, it is asserted that the term "narrow" renders the claims vague and indefinite because it is a relative term subject to various interpretations.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/684,634

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 2 as amended and subsequent dependent claims 4-8 are not indefinite because the term “narrow” is not used. In this Amendment, Applicants have amended claim 2 to replace “formed to be narrow” with --narrowed by putting a lid having an opening at least at a central portion, on said intake for introducing said clean air--.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Claims 2, 10 and 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the “admitted prior art” as set forth in the passages bridging pages 3 and 4 and pages 4 and 5 of the specification.

Regarding claim 2, it is asserted that Applicant admits that it is known in the art to dry a recording layer by rotating the substrate at high speed and flowing clean air toward the recording layer, “when the intake...is wide...” It is therefore, asserted that at least, the claim is obvious over the prior art.

Regarding claims 10 and 11, it is asserted that Applicant admits that it is known in the art to employ two dye application mechanisms for one molding machine. It is further asserted that reducing n/m ratio to a number less than 2 would have been obvious depending on molding cycle time and duty expected for the applicator’s machines.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended are not *prima facie* obvious over the “admitted art.”

In this Amendment, Applicants have amended claim 2 to incorporate the subject matter of original claim 3. “Admitted prior art” does not teach or suggest a method for producing an

information-recording medium comprising, on a substrate, a recording layer capable of recording information, wherein said method comprising a step of drying said recording layer by rotating said substrate at a high speed and allowing clean air to flow toward said recording layer formed on said substrate, wherein an intake for introducing said clean air is narrowed by putting a lid having an opening at least at a central portion, on said intake for introducing said clean air. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 2 is not obvious over the prior art.

In the conventional production of information-recording medium using a molding machine and a dye application mechanism, more than two dye application mechanisms are generally installed for one molding machine, because the speed of molding by the molding machine is higher than that of the dye application mechanism.

Since each molding machine has a stamper or molding conditions different from other molding machines, dye application conditions (such as, concentration of dye solution, temperature and humidity in coating dye solution) should also be adjusted for each dye application mechanism in a subsequent process of dye application. Therefore, when the number of the application mechanisms per molding machine is large, the maintenance cost for the respective equipment is high, and quality control for each of the production lines is complicated. See page 4, line 26 to page 5, line 1 of the present specification.

The present invention was made considering the conditions of molding and dye application processes. If “a relationship of $n/m < 2$ ” is satisfied, “provided that m represents the number of substrate-molding machine or machines and n represents the number of dye application mechanism or mechanisms for forming a dye recording layer,” “the quality control is

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/684,634


easily performed and the maintenance cost is reduced.” See page 5, lines 19-24 of the present specification.

In view of the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Fang Liu
Registration No. 51,283

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

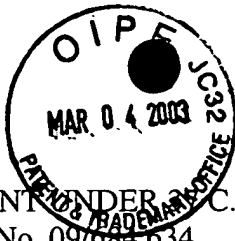
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Date: March 4, 2003



AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appl. No. 09/084,634

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 3 and 9 are canceled.

The claims are amended as follows:

2. (amended) A method for producing an information-recording medium comprising, on a substrate, a recording layer capable of recording information, said method comprising the a step of:

drying said recording layer by rotating said substrate at a high speed and allowing clean air to flow toward said recording layer formed on said substrate, wherein:

an intake for introducing said clean air is ~~formed to be narrow~~ narrowed by putting a lid having an opening at least at a central portion, on said intake for introducing said clean air.

4. (amended) The method for producing said information-recording medium according to claim 32, wherein said opening is formed to have a wedge-shaped configuration.

5. (amended) The method for producing said information-recording medium according to claim 32, wherein said opening is formed to have a substantially rhombic configuration.

6. (amended) The method for producing said information-recording medium according to claim 32, wherein said lid has a first opening which has a large diameter disposed at a central portion, and it has a plurality of second openings which have diameters gradually decreased for those disposed in a direction toward an outer circumference in which a central angle resides in a spacing distance of not less than 10°.

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AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/684,634

7. (amended) The method for producing said information-recording medium according to claim 32, wherein said lid is formed to have a substantially conical configuration which has a diameter continuously decreased downwardly, and it has an opening at a central portion.

8. (amended) The method for producing said information-recording medium according to claim 32, wherein said lid has an opening at a central portion, and it has a plurality of fins which are formed at a lower surface in which a central angle resides in a spacing distance of not less than 10°.